

WITCHES AND WITCHCRAFT.

Curious Practices Now Prevalent in Pennsylvania.

From the New York Times.

COLUMBIA, Penn., April 7.—The bringing of a law suit in a justice's court in one of the back regions of this county by a young man against his mother to recover damages for the loss of a dog which he claims she bewitched so that it ran in a circle until it died of exhaustion, has brought into public notice the fact that there is an almost general belief in witchcraft, charms, and magic spells among the farming population in these isolated localities, and that there are many old women who regularly consult with young and old, and in whose arts and supernatural powers they put the greatest faith. At the trial of the lawsuit mentioned several of these "witches" were present, and the case, and the curious and absurd beliefs they profess were given in great detail. The principal one, and the one most sought for advice and counsel by the country for miles around, is Barbara Fisher, who lives in the Dunkard settlement, five miles from Reinholdville, in a small cabin in the mountains. She is 50 years old, bent and gray, but is still active and well preserved physically. She is a shrewd, cunning old woman and lives alone. She is independent that she will take the case of one who is a stranger to her, or who she thinks lives in any town, unless the applicant simply wants her to treat him for a common ailment requiring no "wonder working." A sufferer from rheumatism, for example, or a child with a fever, she will treat at once, and men, women, and children come from near and far to seek her aid. Her husband, she says, was a "witch" himself, and she takes her wives and children to her for every ill. If a child is deformed, demented, blind, tongue-tied, or unaturally afflicted in any way, it is taken to her, and she undertakes it at once. If there is a trouble with cattle, or a cow is brachy, if crops look bad, Dame Fisher's aid is the first thing sought. She stands ready at any time to extend her aid, and she takes it in her own hands to undertake it at once. If there is a trouble with cattle, or a cow is brachy, if crops look bad, Dame Fisher's aid is the first thing sought. She stands ready at any time to extend her aid, and she takes it in her own hands to undertake it at once. If there is a trouble with cattle, or a cow is brachy, if crops look bad, Dame Fisher's aid is the first thing sought. She stands ready at any time to extend her aid, and she takes it in her own hands to undertake it at once.

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